

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 0219

LIMDIS

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FOR AF/E

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (RICHARDSON, WILLIAM)
SUBJ: STAFFDEL RICHARDSON

FOLLOWING MEMCON RICHARDSON CONVERSATION WITH POPULAR AFRICAN LEAGUE
FOR INDEPENDENCE (LPAI) LEADERSHIP

QUOTE:

PARTICIPANTS: HASSAN GOULED, PRESIDENT OF LPAI AHMED DIN,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF LPAI; WILLIAM RICHARDSON, SENATE FOREGIN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF; LOUIS F. JANOWSKI, AMERICAN EMBASSY
ADDIS ABABA

TIME AND PLACE: DEC 20, 1976, LAS SIESTA HOTEL, DJIBOUTI, TFAI

SUBJ: RICHARDSON CONVERSATION WITH POPULAR AFRICAN LEAGUE
FOR INDEPENDENCE (00-8) LEADERSHIP

LANGUAGE: FRENCH

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AFTER INTRODUCTIONS, THE REPORTING OFFICER EXPLAINED MR.
RICHARDSON'S POSITION AND THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT. GOULED
STATED IN HIS VIEW IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN PEACE IN
THE HORN AND THAT DJIBOUTI WISHED FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL. HE
THEN INTRODUCED DINI AS PARTY SPOKESMAN.

M4. RICHARDSON OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY NOTING THERE HAD BEEN PRESS REPORTS IN THE US OF BOTH ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI SUBVERSION WHICH MENACED THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TERRITORY. DINI STATED YES, A MENACE DID EXIST, AND THE MENACE WAS ETHIOPIA. THE EPMG WAS AFRAID THE LPAI WAS TOO CLOSE TO SOMALIA, AND THAT ETHIOPIA WOULD LOSE ITS ACCESS TO THE SEA. A HOSTILE SITUATION EXISTED, AND BECAUSE OF THIS, THE EPMG OUGHT GUARANTEES. SUCH GUARANTEES WOULD NEGATE AND NEUTRALIZE DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE. THE EPMG WISHED TO DETERMINE AND DECIDE DJIBOUTI'S FOREIGN POLICY AND ALSO WISHED AN UPPER HAND ON ITS ECONOMY. THE LPAI HAD TRIED TO CALM THE EPMG'S FEARS. THE LPAI LEADERSHIP HAD SEEN EPMG FOMIN KIFLE IN ADDIS ABABA, AND DURING ALL VISITS ABROAD HAD VISITED ETHIOPIAN EMBASSIES TO AFFIRM THAT THE LPAI WAS NOT PRO-SOMALI, TO ASSURE THE EPMG OF ETHIOPIAN ACCESS TO THE SEA AND TO DECLARE THEIR DESIRE FOR FRIENDSHIP. THESE EFFORTS HAVE NOT BEEN RECIPROCATED. WHEN BERHANU DINKA (DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DIVISION--EPMG FOREIGN MINISTRY) VISITED DJIBOUTI IN OCTOBER HE MADE CONTACTS WITH THE OPPOSITION AND PROMISED THEM FINANCIAL SUPPORT MAKE THAT OPPOSITION A REALITY. THE LPAI HAD RECEIVED DOCUMENTS WITH BERHANU DINKA'S HANDWRITTEN COMMENTS IN THE MARGIN THAT PROVED THE EPMG'S ACTIONS.

RICHARDSON REQUESTED A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT AND DINI INDICATED IT WOULD BE PASSED THE FOLLOWING DAY.

DINI CONTINUED BY NOTING THAT "WE" HAD GONE TO ADEN AND HAD ALSO TALKED WITH DEPUTY PERMREP BENNETT AS USUN, AND ASKED
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THAT BOTH THE PDRY AND THE SUG CONVEY TO THE EPMG DJIBOUTI'S SINCERE DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO LPAI-SOMALI RELATIONS, DINI INDICATED THAT THE LPAI WAS NOT ASKING THE GSDR FOR ANYTHING, SINCE TO DO SO WOULD CREATE SOMALI COUNTER-DEMANDS. THE FUTURE " REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI" (ROD) WISHED BALANCED RELATIONS WITH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS. IN A REGION DOMINATED BY SOCIALIST COUNTRIES (PDRY, SOMALIA, & ETHIOPIA), THE ROD WISHED TO PLAY THE SAME ROLE AS HONG KONG DID IN ASIA. DJIBOUTI DID NOT WISH TO BE A SOCIALIST COUNTRY AND WISHED TO MAINTAIN A LIBERAL ECONOMY, DESPITE BEING SURROUNDED BY SOCIALIST NEIGHBORS. DINI STATED THAT IF THE EPMG PROVOKED TROUBLE IT WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE AND THE ROD WOULD NOT BE THE ONLY VICTIM. DJIBOUTI WAS THE "STRATEGIC KEY" TO THE ENTIRE REGION.

RICHARDSON THEN NOTED THAT THERE WERE ALSO REPORTS IN THE US PRESS THAT THE LPAI WAS PRO-SOMALI. DINI STATED THE PARTY WAS NOT PRO-SOMALI, BUT PRO-DJIBOUTI. ALTHOUGH THE LPAI HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE GSDR, WHICH PROVIDED ASSISTANCE, THE LPAI WAS NOT GUIDED BY THE SOMALIS. GOULED THEN STATED THAT BEFORE

VISITING MOGADISCIO, FOUR REQUESTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR A VISIT TO ADDIS. ALL HAD BEEN REFUSED. THE LPAI MAINTAINED AN OFFICE IN MOGADISCIO, AND WHEN FONMIN KIFLE HAD BEEN ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO OPEN AN LPAI OFFICE IN ADDIS, HIS REPLY WAS "NEVER*".

RICHARDSON THEN NOTED THE REPORT OF A FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE SOMALI COAST (FLCS) PLOT AGAINST GOULED'S LIFE LAST JULY. IN VIEW OF THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE LPAI AND THE FLCS HOW COULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE EXPLAINED? DINI NOTED THAT THE PLOT WAS NOT PROVEN, THAT THE POLICIES OF THE FLCS AS AN ORGANIZATION DID NOT PRECLUDE ACTIONS BY INDIVIDUAL FLCS MEMBERS, AND NOTED THE RECENT CHANGES IN THE FLCS LEADERSHIP. HE ADDED THAT YESTERDAY'S FLCS CONGRESS HAD PASSED A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE LPAI WHICH REAFFIRMED CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

RICHARDSON THEM ASKED IF THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA
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COULD CAUSE IT TO ACT RASHLY. DINI REPLIED THAT COUNTRIES WITH INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES SEEK EXTERNAL SOLUTIONS, THAT CLANDESTINE ACTION BY THE EPMG WAS POSSIBLE, AND THAT BERHANU DINKA'S ACTIONS WERE PROOF OF ETHIOPIAN INTENT. GOULED INTERJECTED HIS VIEW THAT SUCH ACTIONS WERE NOT IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERESTS. DINI NOTED THAT IN ORDER FOR ETHIOPIA TO CAUSE DISRUPTION, IT NEEDED EXTERNAL AID. IF THE USG PROVIDED THE MEANS, ETHIOPIAN ACTION AGAINST THE TFAI WAS POSSIBLE. IF NOT, EPMG ACTION WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. THE LPAI DID NOT BELIEVE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WOULD PROVIDE AID TO THE EPMG, BECAUSE OF THEIR CLOSE TIES TO THE GSDR. GOULE NOTD THAT IF THERE WAS TROUBLE, IT WOULD BE THE FAULT OF THE GREAT POWERS. OTHERWISE, THE SITUATION COULD BE CONTROLLED.

RICHARDSON THEN NOTED THAT IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH ANOTHER HIGH LPAI OFFICIAL, THE VIEW HAD BEEN EXPRESSED THT US MONEY WAS BEING FUNNELED THROUGH THE EPMG TO THE NATIONAL UNION FOR INDEPENDENCE (UNI). DID EITHER INDIVIDUAL BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE?

DINI STATED THAT THE LPAI KNEW THE EPMG WAS PROVIDING MONEY TO THE OPPOSITION, BUT THAT HE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE USG. THE REPORTING OFFICER STATED THAT THE USG WAS NOT PROVIDING SUCH ASSISTANCE.

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MR. RICHARDSON THEN ASKED IF EITHER GOULED OR DINI WERE AWARE OF THE PRESENT EPMG DELEGATION IN MOSCOW WHICH WAS ATTEMPTING TO PURCHASE SOVIET ARMS. GOULED APPEARED GENUINELY SURPRISED. DINI HASTILY REPLIED THAT THIS DID NOT REPRESENT A DANGER SINCE THE SOVIETS WERE ALREADY ARMING THE SOMALIS.

MR. RICHARDSON THEN ASKED ABOUT THE IRREDENTIST CLAIMS ON THE TFAI IN THE SOMALI CONSTITUTION. DINI TRACED THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOMALIA'S CLAIM THROUGH THE SOMALI COLONIAL PERIOD AND STATED THAT A FORWARD LOOKING PROCLAMATION MADE FIRST IN THE 1940'S WAS NOW UNFORTUNATELY VIEWED AS A NEGATIVE ACT. IN ANY CASE THE SOMALI CONSTITUTION WAS SUSPENDED AND THE GSDR POSED NO IMMEDIATE THREAT.

RICHARDSON ASKED WHAT ROLE THE USSR WAS PLAYING. DINI REPLIED THE SOVIETS WERE PLAYING NO VISIBLE ROLE. GOULED NOTED THAT THE LPAI LEADERS HAD NOT SEEN ANY RUSSIANS OR HAD ANY CONTACTS WITH THEM. DINI STATED THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT ATTEMPTING TO MAKE CONTACTS. GOULED STATED THAT NEITHER WAS THE USG. DINI NOTED THAT THIS LACK OF CONTACT DID NOT MEAN LPAI WAS ANI-SOVIET. GOULED NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE IN A DOMINANT POSITION

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IN SOMALIA AND PROVIDED TECHNICAL, MILITARY AND SOCIAL AID OF ALL KINDS.

RICHARDSON ASKED FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT ABDALLAH KAMIL. DINI REPLIED THAT HE WAS BOTH STRONG AND WEAK. THE LPAI WAS SUPPORTING KAMIL AND IT REPRESENTED 80 PERCENT OF POPULATION. TWO MINISTERS IN HIS CABINET REPRESENTED THE LPAI. THE LPAI COULD HAVE HAD

MORE, BUT ONLY ASKED FOR TWO. THE LPAI AGREED WITH KAMIL'S PRESENT PROGRAMS, BUT IF HE CHANGED THESE PROGRAMS FOR ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL REASONS, HE WOULD NO LONGER BE STRONG.

ASKD ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE LPAI-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP COALITION, DINI INDICATED THAT THE TWO GROUPS WERE WORKING WELL TOGETHER. GOULED AGREED, NOTING THAT PROBLEMS WERE DISCUSSED IN A DEMOCRATIC FASHION. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS DID EXIST, BUT THESE COULD NOT BE BLAMED ON THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP.

RICHARDSON THEN MOVED THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD AND ASKED IF THERE WOULD BE A FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE. DINI NOTED THAT THE FUTURE ROD NEEDED EVERYTHING--ANY ARMY, MONEY TO FINANCE ONE, AND MONEY FOR DEVELOPMENT. HE STATED THE TERRITORY HAD NOTHING. GOULED NOTED THAT IF NOTHING ELSE, THEY HAD THEIR PRIDE. DINI NOTED THAT ANY COUNTRY WHOSE DEFENSE WAS GUARANTEED BY AN OUTSIDE POWER WAS NOT TRULY INDEPENDENT. DJIBOUTI'S NEIGHBORS OPPOSED FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE, AND DJIBOUTI DID NOT WISH TO BE DEPENDENT ON FRANCE. HOWEVER, IF THE GOF DID NOT HELP THE FUTURE ROD, IT FACED AN ETHIOPIAN ATTACK. DINI READILY NOTED THE DILEMMA THAT EXISTED BETWEEN THE LACK OF ANY ARMY OR FUNDS TO CREATE ONE AND THE DESIRE NOT TO PLACE THE ROD'S DEFENSE IN THE HANDS OF AN OUTSIDE POWER. HE ADDED THAT A FRENCH BASE WOULD CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS. GOULED STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A STRATEGIC BASE IN DJIBOUTI.

RICHARDSON THEN ASKED, IN THEIR VIEW, WHAT SHOULD BE THE
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APPROPRIATE US POLICY TOWARDS THE NEW STATE?

GOULED STATED THAT DJIBOUTI AND THE US NEEDED EACH OTHER. DJIBOUTI NEEDED TO DEVELOP, AND UNEXPLOITED RESOURCES EXISTED WHICH HOPEFULLY COULD BE DEVELOPED. DINI NOTED THE LAKE ASSAL PROJECT AND GOULED NOTED THE POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES. DINI STATED THAT THERE WERE 200 MILLION TONS OF SALT, 200 MILLION CUBIC METERS OF DOLOMITE, AS WELL AS LARGE AMOUNTS OF ANOTHER MATERIAL USED IN OIL WELL DRILLING IN THE

LAKE ASSAB AREA. A ROAD OF 70 KILOMETERS WAS NEEDED TO EXPLOIT THESE POSSIBILITIES.

IN RESPONSE TO RICHARDSON'S QUESTION AS THE ACCEPTABILITY OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE STATE, DINI QUICKLY STATED THE LPAI FAVORED SUCH INVESTMENTS. GOULED NOTED THAT SUCH INVESTMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT. A FORMULA WOULD HAVE TO BE DEVELOPED TO COVER SUCH INVESTMENTS.

RICHARDSON THEN ASKED WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF THE US PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE? WHAT WERE THEIR VIEWS ON A US CONSULAR PRESENCE PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE? BOTH GOULED AND DINI CLEARLY INDICATED THEY FAVORED A US CONSULAR PRESENCE PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE. GOULED NOTED THAT A CONSULATE COULD BE QUICKLY CONVERTED TO AN EMBASSY AT THE MOMENT OF INDEPENDENCE AND DINI EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT A US CONSULAR PRESENCE MIGHT HELP REASSURE THE EPMG. GOULED COMMENTED STOICALLY "PERHAPS, PERHAPS". DINI INDICATED THAT THE FUTURE STATE WISHED TO BE NON-ALIGNED, THAT IT WOULD NOT BE ANTI-US, THAT DJIBOUTI WISHED GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL, AND THAT US ASSISTANCE WOULD BE WELCOMED.

GOULED NOTED THAT THIS HAD BEEN A USEFUL CONVERSATION, AND ASKED IF THERE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS. RICHARDSON ASKED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF ARAB STATES. DINI NOTED THAT DJIBOUTI WAS INTERESTED IN ARAB HELP. HE NOTED THAT EGYPTIANS
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HAD RECENTLY OPENED A CONSULAR REPRESENTATION IN DJIBOUTI. DINI INDICATED THE EGYPTIANS CONSIDERED DJIBOUTI AS THE SOUTHERN END OF THE SUEZ CANAL. GOULED STATED THAT THEY WERE AS YET UNSURE AS TO WHAT ROLE THE EGYPTIANS AND THE SAUDIS WISHED TO PLAY.

IN CLOSING, GOULED NOTED THIS HAD BEEN A GOOD CONVERSATION AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT "WE MUST FOLLOW THIS UP AND HAVE CONTACT IN THE FUTURE". DINI ADDED THAT DJIBOUTI WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION ASTRIDE MAJOR MARITIME ROUTES. THE FUTURE REPUBLIC ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION, WHICH WOULD BE HANDLED IN THE INTEREST OF ALL. DJIBOUTI WOULD BE A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY, AND THAT THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP WISHED THE US TO HELP, TO REFRAIN FROM INTERFERENCE WITH ITS SOVEREIGNTY, AND TO RESPECT THE LEADERSHIP'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS. THE CONVERSATION CLOSED WITH GOULED STATING "WE HOPE YOU CAN HELP US."

REPORTING OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

HASSAN GOULED IS A TALL MAN BY LOCAL STANDARDS, AND THE CONSENSUS CHOICE TO BE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI. HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN WHO ALLOWED HIS SUBORDINATES TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS IN DETAIL AND THEN IMPOSED A CONSENSUS SOLUTION FROM ABOVE. GOULED CORRECTED DINI ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, AND DINI PROMPTLY DEFERRED TO GOULED.

DINI'S FRENCH WAS EXCELLENT, AND HE WAS PREPARED AS LPAI SPOKESMAN TO EXPOUND ON THE FULL RANGE OF ISSUES. HE GAVE AN IMPRESSION OF DYNAMISM AND WAS PERHAPS TOO POLISHED TO INSPIRE IMMEDIATE CONFIDENCE.

THE DOCUMENTS MENTIONED BY DINI WERE NEVER PASSED. THEY ARE
LIKELY THOSE CONTAINED IN LPAI BULLETIN NO 80 OF DECEMBER
10-17, WHICH IS AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT.

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GOULED APPEARED SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE FOR ESTABLISHING AND
MAINTAINING FUTURE CONTACTS WITH US OFFICIALS.

CLASSIFIED BY HERBERT S. MALIN

GDS-DECLASSIFIED 12/31/83

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